

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of the application is requested.

Claims 1-22 remain in the application. None of the claims have been amended.

Each of the several art rejections presented in the Office action includes, as the primary reference, U.S. Patent No. US 6,466,359 B2 to Sunagawa. Sunagawa lists a filing date in the United States of April 23, 2001. The first publication of Sunagawa is listed as January 31, 2002 (US 2002/0012153 A1). The reference is thus available as prior art in the United States as of **April 23, 2001**. 35 U.S.C. § 102(e).

The instant application was filed in the United States Patent Office on February 11, 2002, with a claim for priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119 to German patent application No. 101 05 978.7, filed **February 9, 2001**. The German priority application, therefore, predates the reference Sunagawa.

A certified priority document was filed together with the application on February 11, 2002. The Examiner's acknowledgement of the receipt thereof on form PTOL-326 is appreciated. Enclosed herewith, in order to perfect the claim for priority, is a certified English language translation of the foreign priority document. This perfects applicants' claim for priority and all of the prior art rejections are now moot.

The indicated allowability of claim 11 is appreciatively noted. In light of the earlier priority date of this application, however, no claim amendments are believed to

be necessary, and the claim has not been rewritten in independent form at this time.

In summary, none of the prior art references, whether taken alone or in any combination, either show or suggest the features of any of the claims in this application.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-22 are solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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